

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the Final Office Action of May 20, 2009. This Amendment is in full response thereto. Thus, Applicants respectfully request continued examination and allowance of the application.

Claims 7-12 are pending in this application.

First Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claims 7, 8 and 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No 5,582,036 (Drnevich, et al. I) in view of U.S. Patent No 2003/0213688 (Wang, et al.). Applicant respectfully asserts because Drnevich I and Wang, et al., alone or in combination fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claims as amended. Applicant has amended claim 7 to require that the blast furnace feed fluid have over 90% by volume of O_2 . On the other hand, Drnevich I discloses oxygen-enriched air of 21-40 mole percent O_2 fed to a blast furnace. Wang, et al. fails to cure this deficiency. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Second Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Drnevich I in view of Wang, et al. as applied to claim 7 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,802,875 (Drnevich II). Applicant respectfully asserts because Drnevich I and Wang, et al., alone or in combination fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claims as described above and Drnevich II fails to cure the deficiencies of Drnevich I and Wang, et al. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should the examiner believe a telephone call would expedite the prosecution of the application, he/she is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

It is not believed that any fee is due at this time. If that belief is incorrect, please debit deposit account number 01-1375. Also, the Commissioner is authorized to credit any overpayment to deposit account number 01-1375.

Respectfully submitted,

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